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Please contact me with questions or if you see an error.

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REVERSIBLE BINDING

This border variation encloses the edge and is fully reversible. It's worked in two layers, circularly, on two circular needles. Use this for the fronts of cardigans, to enclose cut edges, or when you want a more substantial border.

Picking up for the binding

Using a circular needle one or two sizes larger than you normally would for the border, pick up and knit stitches as you normally would. Make a half hitch with the working yarn at the end of this needle. This is the “front” needle.



On the back of the fabric, you can see the back of the pick-up yarn between each stitch. Using a circular needle the size you want for your border, pick up and knit stitches under the strand of pick-up yarn all the way across. Make a half hitch with the working yarn at the end of this needle. You should have one stitch less than on the first needle. This is the “back” needle.”



Working the binding

Using another circular needle the size you actually want for your border, knit across the front needle (set aside the empty needle—you won't be using it any more).

Holding both ends of the back needle, knit its stitches (this keeps all the stitches on this same needle). Repeat for the front needle. Continue working this way until the border is as wide as you'd like. Be sure to end by working across the front needle, and when you work across it for the last time, knit the final two stitches together. This serves two purposes. First, it makes the number of stitches on the two needles equal in preparation for joining. Second, it insures that the stitches on the two layers line up properly when joined.

Joining the layers

- For a seamless join, use Kitchener stitch to join the two layers.
- For a knitted join, use Three Needle Bind Off, being sure to work loosely so the edge doesn't pull in. To make it reversible, alternately knit stitches from the two needles together, then purl stitches from the two needles.
- You can join the two layers together at any time and continue with a single layer. To do this, work as if you were going to do Three Needle Bind Off, but just knit or purl the stitches together—don't actually bind off.



Notes on bindings

Counting your rows: To make sure that the two layers are exactly the same length, look at the wrong side of them and count the purred ridges between the fabric and the needles. If there is an equal number of ridges on each side, they are even. This is because the first pickup row is centered on the edge of the fabric—it's not included in either count. When you pick up across the back on the second needle, that's actually the beginning of the first round of the binding.

TUBULAR BORDER

Tubular borders have several advantages.

- Easiest and quickest reversible border to get started.
- Can be made a double thickness just wide enough to enclose the edge then reduced to a single thickness for the rest of the border.
- No need to sew—the two layers are joined by knitting them together

Picking up for a tubular border

Pick up and knit as usual for a border, but work a yarn over after every stitch except the final stitch. This almost doubles the number of stitches. The yarn overs serve as stitches for the “wrong-side” layer, while the picked up stitches are for the “right-side” layer.



Working the tubular border

You can work in either tubular knitting or tubular purling. Tubular purling is quicker because you don't need to reposition the yarn after every stitch.

Tubular Purling:

Row 1: *Slip 1 purlwise, p1; repeat from * until 1 stitch remains, slip 1 purlwise.

Row 2: *Purl 1, slip 1 purlwise; repeat from * until 1 stitch remains, p1.

Working both of these rows creates one purred round (shown right after completing one round).



If you prefer Tubular Knitting, it's worked this way:

Row 1: *Yarn forward, slip 1 purlwise, yarn back, k1; repeat from * until 1 stitch remains, yarn forward, slip 1 purlwise.

Row 2: *Knit 1, yarn forward, slip 1 purlwise, yarn back; repeat from * until 1 stitch remains, k1.

Working both of these rows creates one knitted round.

Joining the layers

Knit 2 together over and over all the way across, until 1 stitch remains, k1.

From this point, you can work the single layer of stitches as for any conventional border. To finish your class sample, work a few rows of k1p1 ribbing and then bind off.



Notes on tubular borders

- If you realize you've missed a yarn over while picking up, work to that point on your first row. Insert the tip of your left needle under the strand on the back of the fabric between the two needles and this will recover your yarn over.
- The picked up stitches and the tubular section of the border may be looser than you like. To prevent this, use much smaller needles to pick up the stitches and work the tubular part of the border. I use needles 3 or 4 sizes smaller than usual and then transition to the normal size (2 sizes smaller than used for the body of the garment) for the single-layer part of the border.
- When joining the layers, working k2tog all the way across makes a noticeable purled ridge on the back of the fabric. To make it reversible, and to transition beautifully to ribbing, work the decreases in your ribbed pattern. For example, for k1p1 ribbing, alternate k2tog and p2tog across. For k2p2, work k2tog twice then p2tog twice (shown above).
- If you work tubular knitting throughout the border, you can join the two layers and bind off at the same time by working the decreases and passing stitches over to bind off as you work across the row. To make the bound off edge reversible, alternate k2tog and p2tog as you bind off.